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USDA AMENDS PESTICIDE REGULATIONS FOR IMPORTED TOBACCOS

WASHINGTON, June 8—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is amending the inspection program for imported flue-cured and burley tobaccos, effective July 1.

J. Patrick Boyle, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said changes include expanding the number of chemicals on the list of prohibited pesticides, revising the maximum concentration of residues in imported tobaccos, and prohibiting imported tobaccos from leaving their points of entry prior to passing USDA inspection.

A fourth change refines a definition, substituting the term "prohibited pesticide residue" for the term "banned pesticide" in the regulations, Boyle said.

The amendments prevent imported flue-cured and burley tobaccos with unacceptable levels of pesticide residues from entering the domestic market, and make language in the regulations conform to the pertinent language of other national and international documents, Boyle said.

"These changes are in accordance with our ongoing efforts to provide the most effective program possible for the public and the tobacco industry. The proposed changes will make the regulations more consistent with the law," he said.

Provisions in the Food Security Act of 1985 require that flue-cured and burley tobaccos be certified as not containing pesticide levels prohibited under the 1947 Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

The amendments will appear as a final rule in the June 9 Federal Register.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE
FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, June 8—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, June 9, through midnight Thursday, June 15.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1987 crop and 1988 crop base quality loan rates of 52.25 and 51.80 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate for 1987 crop and 1988 crop upland cotton during this period is equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Based on data for the week ending June 8, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

Northern Europe Price	75.15
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.95
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.00
Average U.S. location	0.42
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-14.37</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	60.78 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

Northern Europe Price	75.15
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-71.07</u>
	4.08
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.15</u>
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on June 15.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954
#

STUDY TRACKS SURGE IN SALMONELLA

WASHINGTON, June 9—When is salmonella most likely to infect beef cattle in the marketing chain?

U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers hoped to find out by checking blood and fecal samples from 200 beef cattle as they were shipped from farms in eastern Tennessee to sale barns and on to a feedlot in Amarillo, Texas.

The study, begun in 1987, showed that none of the cattle was shedding salmonella bacteria in their feces on the farm or at the sale barn. But three were shedding the bacteria by the time they arrived at the feedlot, and 16 were shedding the bacteria by the time they left the feedlot.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the animals became infected while at the feedlots, according to veterinary pathologist Don E. Carrier. Carrier works at the Veterinary Toxicology Laboratory operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service at College Station, Texas.

"Shedding can be very intermittent," Carrier noted. "The cow may have the salmonella bacteria two or three months and not shed again until it's stressed, such as by shipping."

Carrier said salmonella infection can spread when an infected animal's feces contaminates the herd's food or water. In addition, cattle can pick up the infection as they groom each other, licking hair that might be loaded with the bacteria.

The study offers the cattle industry information to help identify and pinpoint the source of the salmonella problem, according to Robert R. Oltjen, associate deputy administrator of the ARS national program Staff.

Even if a carcass is contaminated with salmonella bacteria, proper handling and cooking of the meat will eliminate the health hazard and kill the bacteria, Carrier emphasized.

In the College Station study, testing on one group of 99 calves began in June 1987 and continued through October 1987, while the other group of 101 calves was tested from June through October 1988.

Five types of salmonella known to infect humans were found in the animals: *S. typhimurium*, *S. reading*, *S. newbrunswick*, *S. anatum* and *S. cerro*.

"*Salmonella typhimurium* is probably the best known of these," Carrier said. "But all of them, when they infect humans, can produce the typical gastroenteritis symptoms—diarrhea, vomiting and nausea."

Corrier said the first group of calves showed no salmonella bacteria in their feces or antibodies against the bacteria in their blood either on the farm or at the sale barn. But three percent were shedding on entry at the feedlot, and nine percent were shedding as they left the feedlot, he said.

In the second group, Corrier said none was shedding the Salmonella bacteria on the farm, at the sale barn or on entry at the feedlot. But seven percent were shedding the bacteria as they left the feedlot.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

#

USDA PROPOSES HARD AND SOFT WHITE WHEAT CLASSES

WASHINGTON, June 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service has proposed replacing the single class "white" wheat in the U.S. Grain Standards with two classes, hard white wheat (HWW) and soft white wheat (SWW).

FGIS Administrator W. Kirk Miller said the revision is necessary because of the recent development of white wheat varieties with hard endosperms and the establishment of a market for them.

Under the proposed new classification, the class SWW would have three subclasses, common white wheat, white club wheat and western white wheat. The class HWW would not have subclasses.

Grain inspectors class wheat by visually examining varietal kernel characteristics such as length, width, contour and texture. Visual examination of wheat kernels has been used since 1917 to determine class and subclass, and is currently the only approved method of classification. Subclass classification is usually based on kernel vitreousness and hardness.

Hard and soft endosperm wheats are marketed as separate products to meet specific end-use needs.

Comments on this proposed change may be submitted in writing no later than July 28 to Lewis Lebakken Jr., Resources Management Division, USDA, FGIS, Room 0628 South, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, D.C. 20090-6454.

Allen Atwood (202) 475-3367

#

USDA CONFERENCE IN GREENSBORO TO HELP SMALL FARMERS

WASHINGTON, June 12—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a regional conference for small or limited resource farmers June 21-23 at North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, N.C., for participants from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Producers with small or limited financial resources are encouraged to attend the June 22 and 23 sessions. The sessions will provide farmers, farm organizations and local officials with information about USDA programs, and advice on topics such as farm marketing and product diversification.

The conference is the third in series organized by USDA's Office of Advocacy and Enterprise. The first was last October in Baton Rouge, La. and the second in March in Albuquerque, N.M.

USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration John Franke said the conferences are part of USDA's effort to ensure that small or economically disadvantaged farmers are fully informed about options for participating in USDA programs, and the many types of technical information and advice available from USDA agencies.

"We've designed the conference to provide the region's small farmers with direct access to officials from USDA's programs," Franke said. "Farmers also can attend sessions on small farm profitability, including workshops on alternative crops and farming methods, marketing strategies, and the formation of cooperatives as an aid to small farmers."

The June 21 session is for USDA personnel only. Officials will discuss issues affecting small or economically disadvantaged farmers, and policies that are most effective in assisting them. "The aim of the first session is to define the special problems faced by small or limited resource farmers, and what role USDA can play in helping solve those problems," said Naomi Churchill, acting director of OAE.

The conference focus will be on alternative agricultural practices and products. "Producing products other than traditional program crops, when linked with creative local and regional marketing, offers the best chance for improving the profitability of small operations," Churchill said. "During the first day's session, local USDA personnel will learn the specifics of this diversified approach to farming, including the advantages of various kinds of crops, marketing strategies and cooperative formation."

On June 23, participating farmers will tour the North Carolina A&T State University farm to see first hand examples of alternative crops and agricultural practices. The June 22 session and June 23 tour start at 8 a.m. on the university campus.

USDA agencies to be represented at the conference include the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration and Forest Service.

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#

NEWLY IDENTIFIED PREDATOR COULD PROTECT AZALEAS

WASHINGTON, June 13—An insect predator tested by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists could protect spring-flowering azaleas from their most serious enemy—the lace bug.

“Until now, there has been no known effective predator or parasite of any lace bug species in the United States,” said John W. Neal, an entomologist for USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

Neal and colleagues discovered the insect predator, *Stethoconus japonicus*, in 1985 on a U.S.-grown potted azalea during a research project at the ARS Florist and Nursery Crops Laboratory in Beltsville, Md.

He said studies now show that a single adult female can consume five or six lace bugs daily, slightly smaller males consume about two or three.

“This predator may eventually disperse naturally on its own over much of the range of its host,” he said. Azaleas grow primarily on the East Coast, although some varieties grow in California, Oregon and Washington.

The azalea lace bug can decimate an azalea, sucking nutrients from the underside of leaves until white, unsightly spots appear. These spots reduce plant vigor and subsequent blooms.

Lace bug eggs hatch on azaleas in late April or early May. *Stethoconus* eggs, which overwinter in plant stems, hatch on the plants in June, when the second generation of lace bugs appears.

If eggs of both insects hatched simultaneously, the predator would soon exhaust its food supply, Neal said.

“The lace bug doesn’t have a chance,” he said. “The predator sidles up, undetected, and gives its unsuspecting victim a lethal injection through its long, needlelike mouth. Holding onto the lace bug with front legs, the predator then withdraws all body fluids and tissue, leaving an externally intact but completely drained shell.”

Neal said the predator’s needlelike mouthpart consists of two stylets, one for injecting lethal enzymes and the other for withdrawing fluids from victims. Its deeply cleft claws allow the predator to hang onto its prey.

This is the first western hemisphere record of the genus *Stethoconus*, which includes eight Old World species. Neal said the predator has since been sighted in three other locations in Maryland and probably coexists with the azalea lace bug population.

Michael Schwartz, an entomologist with the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan, found the predator near azaleas in his front yard. Schwartz lives in New York’s Rockland County, in the lower Hudson Valley. To date, this is the only other sighting outside Maryland.

“Lace bugs had almost destroyed my azaleas,” Schwartz said. “The plants’ survival and return to bloom could be due to the hearty appetite of *Stethoconus*.”

Although insecticides can easily control the lace bug, Neal said a person doesn’t usually notice the pest until substantial damage occurs. Both the lace bug and the predator are tiny insects, only a little larger than a fruit fly.

Doris Sanchez (301) 344-2767

#

OVER THIRTY MILLION ACRES ENROLLED IN CRP

WASHINGTON, June 12—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the enrollment of an additional 2,462,382 acres into the 10-year Conservation Reserve Program. The newly enrolled acreage was approved from bids submitted during the eighth signup held Feb. 6-24.

The total acreage contracted under CRP is 30,592,672 acres, said Keith Bjerke, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. “The acreage enrolled in CRP now exceeds the

28.7 million acres that was in the Soil Bank Program in 1960. CRP now becomes the largest long-term cropland retirement program in U.S. history.”

The next CRP signup dates are July 17-Aug. 4.

The recently expanded eligibility criteria that allows many cropped wetlands into the program resulted in the enrollment of 155,961 acres this signup. Suitable cropped wetland acres will be planted with trees; this new tree cover feature has helped increase the CRP tree planting rate from 6.2 percent during prior signups to 8.3 percent, or 203,703 tree acres, for this signup.

USDA has also recently implemented scour erosion eligibility criteria that allow certain fields that suffer from flood erosion to qualify for CRP; 63,631 acres were enrolled in CRP during the latest signup.

“I encourage producers who farm erodible land or have wet soils to inquire about eligibility for CRP at their local ASCS offices. CRP has authorization to accept acreage only through 1990,” said Bjerke.

The following table shows state-by-state and total CRP enrollment:

	Total contracted acres	Acres	Eighth Signup Wetland acres	Scour acres	Filter strips	Tree acres
AL	499,037	29,608	3,622	2,884	137	19,959
AK	24,701	0	0	0	0	0
AZ	0	0	0	0	0	0
AR	196,416	21,926	2,538	7,073	67	16,119
CA	177,417	6,938	0	0	0	757
CO	1,824,194	76,077	0	0	0	0
CT	10	0	0	0	0	0
DE	866	142	52	0	44	52
FL	113,834	8,677	5	131	0	7,680
GA	618,276	47,475	1,005	200	82	44,669
HI	85	0	0	0	0	0
ID	747,743	33,436	1,588	371	0	1,313
IL	546,670	81,902	9,522	1,475	1,030	5,729
IN	312,812	53,112	1,207	128	806	1,872
IA	1,789,024	153,508	5,435	15,249	385	1,865
KS	2,547,758	162,305	1,012	1,137	67	317
KY	397,474	13,970	209	283	66	574
LA	104,705	16,896	8,849	0	7	11,331

ME	35,624	3,403	73	584	0	264
MD	11,331	1,643	5	0	526	190
MA	32	7	0	0	1	0
MI	169,872	17,120	342	4	231	1,039
MN	1,728,393	84,234	2,358	308	732	3,586
MS	644,256	60,811	5,390	16,915	274	45,632
MO	1,441,712	59,816	1,533	3,305	277	3,609
MT	2,453,749	188,979	588	0	0	17
NE	1,226,271	66,583	1,466	239	41	564
NV	2,397	54	0	8	0	0
NH	0	0	0	0	0	0
NJ	496	132	36	0	0	5
NM	476,059	7,750	0	0	0	0
NY	50,470	3,296	57	10	0	259
NC	124,888	8,889	97	66	3	5,411
ND	2,595,616	420,493	43,078	2,218	235	328
OH	204,791	24,841	1,216	242	249	1,001
OK	1,065,930	48,629	197	4,024	0	348
OR	507,222	9,600	456	561	0	1,952
PA	80,244	9,039	83	0	0	136
PR	440	60	0	0	0	0
RI	0	0	0	0	0	0
SC	247,218	19,929	240	1,481	2,157	14,515
SD	1,587,523	364,663	52,836	1,823	102	132
TN	406,568	27,100	3,108	877	2,632	4,636
TX	3,686,765	229,758	90	753	0	1,949
UT	229,521	2,162	14	42	0	0
VT	187	0	0	0	0	0
VA	65,750	7,232	63	207	178	2,137
WA	899,248	29,018	277	72	0	10
WV	590	37	0	0	0	0
WI	516,341	51,592	7,314	961	136	3,746
WY	232,146	9,540	0	0	0	0
US	30,592,672	2,462,382	155,961	63,631	10,465	203,703

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#

RESEARCHERS REVEAL NEW WEAPON AGAINST SOYBEAN PEST

WASHINGTON, June 14—A tiny worm that has successfully attacked all normally resistant lines of soybeans may meet its match next year.

Cordell, a new soybean variety developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists, will be the first commercial soybean variety with resistance to Race 5 nematodes. It could be available to farmers as soon as 1990, according to USDA plant pathologist Lawrence D. Young. Soybean cyst nematodes are designated as specific “races” based on the types of soybeans on which they will reproduce.

Young said Cordell could be suited for production in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, southern Missouri, Arkansas, northern Mississippi, Alabama and parts of South Carolina.

Soybean cyst nematodes were first found in the United States in 1955 in North Carolina, and today infest as much as 70 percent of the soybean acreage in the Midsouth and Southeast, said Young. He works at the nematology research laboratory operated by USDA’s Agricultural Research Service at Jackson, Tenn.

“We think the Race 5 problem will continue to spread, especially if farmers continue to grow soybean varieties that are resistant to Race 4 nematodes,” Young said. As more beans of a specific resistant variety are grown, the nematodes that can overcome that resistance and evolve into a new “race.”

“We did a survey of soybean producers in western Tennessee, and of 1.4 million acres in production, we estimated 1 million acres were infested with some type of soybean cyst nematode,” Young said. “At least 300,000 acres had Race 5.” Those percentages could hold true for the boot heel of Missouri and eastern Arkansas, too, he added.

“Soybean cyst nematodes invade the roots of the soybean plant,” Young explained. “They do a lot of physical damage, then allow fungi to move in and rot the roots. They will cause yield reductions of 20-40 percent, and sometimes even more. The damaged roots can’t take up enough water and nutrients to produce good yields.”

In field tests on ground known to be infested with Race 5 soybean cyst nematodes, Cordell in 1986 averaged 33.4 bushels per acre. Bedford variety beans, known to be resistant to Races 3 and 4 nematodes, yielded 22.1 bushels, while Forrest variety beans yielded 27.1 bushels per acre. Forrest beans are resistant to Race 3 soybean cyst nematodes.

In 1987, Cordell produced an average of 38.9 bushels per acre on the Race 5-infested ground, compared with 31.2 bushels for Bedford beans and 32.7 bushels for Forrest variety beans, Young said.

Cordell was one of two Race 5-resistant lines of soybeans under development, Young said. Cordell's family tree includes Bedford beans, the first variety with resistance to Race 4 nematodes, and a line with resistance to Race 2 nematodes.

The other line under development is known as J82-190 and includes Forrest in its parentage. The work on both Cordell and J82-190 began in 1980 in cooperation with Edgar E. Hartwig, a research agronomist and plant breeder with ARS' Soybean Production Research Unit at Stoneville, Miss.

Young said tests of Cordell's performance in fields with Race 2 and Race 4 soybean cyst nematodes will be conducted this summer in North Carolina.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089
#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, June 13—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 12.20 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 11.33 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 11.24 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 6.10 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$7.54 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$7.10 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$6.76 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made June 20 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923
#

STERILE TICKS MAY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO STOP CATTLE PEST FROM BREEDING

WASHINGTON, June 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is running an experimental numbers game in the U.S. Virgin Islands in hopes of better protecting U.S. cattle from a deadly disease carried by ticks.

Last week, researchers at USDA's Agricultural Research Service released 5.6 million cattle fever tick larvae on St. Croix Island, said ARS entomologist Ron Davey. The ticks are hybrids that represent a new wrinkle in the sterile-release approach to pest control, Davey said.

“The hybrid males are sterile,” Davey said. “Outwardly they are normal but they do not produce sperm. The females are fertile but they give an even bigger payoff, because they will pass on the sterility to their male offspring. The result is a population crash.” Davey runs the tick breeding and mass-rearing operation at the ARS Cattle Fever Tick Research Laboratory in Mission, Texas.

The hybrids resulted when scientists crossed the two species of ticks—*Boophilus annulatus* and *B. microplus*—that transmit cattle fever. Other sterile-release projects, which grew from ARS research that began in the 1950's, use minuscule doses of radiation to make male insects sterile.

The tick deployment will be followed by a dozen more—of up to 10 million ticks—monthly on two 28-acre St. Croix sites over the next year.

If the strategy works, Davey said, it could supplement an existing USDA eradication program. That program relies on chemical controls to stop cattle fever ticks from spreading north of a buffer zone at the Texas-Mexico border. But in several areas of Mexico, he noted, the ticks have developed resistance to chemicals.

Cattle fever, or babesiosis, kills up to 80 percent of adult cattle that contract it, he said. All U.S. cattle breeds are susceptible. Humans do not get cattle fever and are not bitten by the ticks.

At the test sites, now populated by an estimated 1 million healthy cattle fever tick larvae, “the odds are now at least five to one in favor of the sterile-release strategy wiping out ticks that transmit cattle fever,” said Davey. “The strategy is a natural way to cause ticks to destroy their own population.”

At the Virgin Islands sites, the five-to-one odds for a tick population crash should become even more favorable as the monthly deployments proceed, he said.

For the experiment, hybrid ticks are being reared by the millions. “No one has ever tried to mass-rear such a large number of sterile hybrids,” he said.

The first group was released by entomologist Joe Despina of the ARS Plant Disease and Insect Control Lab in St. Croix. No ticks will be released in the area of another pair of plots to be used as controls.

The test sites are being leased by USDA from the island government. They are in isolated areas far from any livestock operations, and the hybrids will not affect the island’s overall population of cattle fever ticks, which Davey said were a “constant problem” for island farmers.

To calculate the number of hybrid larvae needed to overwhelm the native ticks at the sites, scientists used data on tick numbers collected by Despina, along with data from a computer model developed by ARS researchers in Gainesville, Fla.

In 1978, cattle fever reappeared in Puerto Rico after an absence of 24 years, according to Glen Garriss, ARS research entomologist in Kerrville, Texas. In 1988, he estimated, the ticks themselves cost Puerto Rican beef and dairy producers more than \$38 million in lost milk production and weight gains and cattle deaths. The estimate does not include losses from babesiosis.

So far, cattle fever ticks in Puerto Rico show no resistance to chemical controls, Garriss said. But ARS researchers are continuing to test new chemical controls, even as they pursue the sterile-release strategy.

The first—as well as the biggest and most successful—sterile-release program has virtually wiped out the screwworm fly, another livestock pest, from the U.S. and Mexico. Late last year the program expanded into Central America.

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